

***Cork and Fuzz: The Swimming Lesson***

By Dori Chaconas

This is a sweet story of friendship between a muskrat and a possum. In this story Cork is teaching a reluctant Fuzz to swim and it's quite an adventure for both! Kids ages preschool through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will smile as they relate to this swimming session between friends. It's recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Cork and Fuzz: The Finders Keepers***

By Dori Chaconas

This is a sweet story of friendship between a muskrat and a possum. In this story Fuzz finds a stone that belongs to Cork and thinks "finders keepers" until friendship prevails. Kids, ages preschool through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will smile as they relate to this ownership issue between friends. It's recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Cork and Fuzz: The Babysitters***

By Dori Chaconas

This is a sweet story of friendship between a muskrat and a possum. In this story Cork is babysitting and loses his charge, and it's Fuzz to the rescue. Kids ages preschool through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will smile as they relate to this lesson in helping between friends. It's recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Snakes***

By Jeff Corwin

This is an All Aboard Reading book: level 3. There's lots of great info about herps in this book for snake lovers everywhere. The photos help cement the text and by the time they are done, kids will be experts! This book is recommended for any library collection and especially for elementary students.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Sea Horses***

By Nicole Corse

This is a Scholastic Level 1 Reader. It's full of easy to read text and great photos and fun facts about these amazing creatures. Kids in early elementary school will be fascinated by this fun book. It's a great addition to any public collection.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Finding My Place***

By Traci L. Jones

Being different is always tough and Tiphonie has to deal with that when her family moves from comfortable Denver to an upscale neighborhood and a new school district. As the only black female student in her new school, and with an unusually spelled name, Tiphonie initially finds it difficult to assimilate. Tiphonie is befriended by another student, named Jackie, who doesn't fit the "Blonde Barbie" model of many of the local girls, and life becomes more fun again. Set in 1975, *Finding My Place* touches on the social structures and distinctions of the time. Even though she is aggravated by her parents' constant push to excel and to be a role model for other young black teens, Tiphonie learns to balance these expectations and eventually make new friends. This book is recommended for 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up, in both school and public libraries. Youth struggling to find their own place in the world, especially those who feel as if they don't belong, will identify with the character in this novel. Although this is a character driven novel, the setting and the time period chosen by the author contribute to the atmosphere and the progression of the story. "Coming of age" and "not fitting in" are common themes in older juvenile and YA fiction that can be addressed in so many ways. This is a mild version of some of those struggles especially when compared to the blunter, humorous, yet unsettling *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* by Sherman Alexie.

MeMe Smith, Schuyler Public Library

***Let the Whole Earth Sing Praise***

By Tomie DePaola

This is a short little book with enchanting illustrations encouraging children to celebrate the beauty of God's earth. Less than two dozen pages long and less than ten words per page, this colorful book will appeal to parents wanting to introduce their children to a Christian approach and appreciation of their surroundings. This book is colorful, short, and ideal for the very young children with short attention spans. This book is recommended for preschool and up in any library. According to the author the book was inspired by two pieces of Old Testament Scripture. The author is known for his numerous children's books with a Christian slant. He has won a Newberry Honor and a Caldecott Honor for his works.

MeMe Smith, Schuyler Public Library

***Adventures According to Humphrey***

By Betty G. Birney

Humphrey is one lucky hamster. He gets to live in Room 26 and take part in all of the fun things the kids in Mrs. Brisbane's class get to do. At the conclusion of each week of school he is fortunate to go home with one of his friends from the class for the weekend. This year his friends are building boats and they will have two contests: one to see which team's boat floats and wins a race on Potter's pond and the other to decide on the most artistic vessel. Each day Mrs. Brisbane reads a story about pirates and the students have time to work on their projects. Humphrey's friends tackle their tasks with determination but he learns that things don't always go smoothly when students have to work together and sometimes jealousy and animosity creep in. Without being preachy, this book does a great job of showing the importance of teamwork and also touches on other youthful challenges. With numerous quotes from the fictitious "Jolly Roger's Guide to Life" by I.C. Waters, readers receive tips on getting on in their youthful world. This book is recommended for 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up in any library, the book contains Humphrey's list of ten things you should know about pirates. Lovers of all things small and furry, and those who dream of adventures at sea will be captivated by this fun little treasure. The author has written four other Humphrey tales and is the winner of numerous awards for her book.

MeMe Smith, Schuyler Public Library

***The First Pup: The Real Story of How Bo Got to the White House***

By Bob Staake

This is a truly wonderful story where the reader gets a glimpse of how a very famous family can be very normal, even if they happen to live in the White House! Through whimsically creative illustrations and an easy to follow storyline the reader learns how Sasha and Malia Obama became the owners of their beloved dog, Bo. The excitement and anticipation any family has when planning on getting a puppy is evident from the moment President Obama announces the family was going to get a puppy to when Senator Kennedy rolls up in a limousine to the White House during the Easter celebration with the family's special new addition. This story would be suited for both public and school libraries for primary school readers, or anyone who loves puppies! The illustrations add just as much to the story as the text. It would be a fun book to share and talk about how even the most famous people are people just like you.

Jane Dodson

***Molly Moon and the Morphing Mystery***

By Georgia Byng

This book is adventure after adventure. Molly is amazing. She can hypnotize anyone, travel through time, read minds, and after sneaking into an enemy's office and finding a very special book she can now morph too! Molly can go from human to animal, but getting back to human form, turns out to be a little difficult. While she and her twin brother, Mickey work on trying to morph back into themselves they are trying to solve a mystery and save the world. Molly and Mickey's private tutor, Mrs. Hunroe offers some help and suddenly they are back in action in their world of magic. Mrs. Hunroe explains to Molly and Mickey that they are descendents of the famous hypnotist Dr. Logan. She knows of their hypnotizing, time stopping, mind reading, and time traveling ways and tells them of a special book that Dr. Logan wrote on, among other things, how to morph. Hunroe tells the twins of an evil man named Mr. Black who stole the book from them. She wants Molly and Mickey to get the book and return it to her before Mr. Black unleashes its true potential. Many twists and turns spin the story in every direction and a huge betrayal spins the plot in one crazy direction. I would recommend this book for upper elementary and middle school readers in a public or school library. If you like mystery and adventure this is fun read.

Jane Dodson

***Someone Used My Toothbrush and Other Bathroom Poems***

By Carol Diggory Shields

Poetry in a bathroom, cute but seemed long by the time you got to page 32, maybe it was one poem too long. The pictures are nice and add to the poems. True, you probably won't find a poem dedicated to bathroom humor, and a young person might think the book is great, but I would be looking at my budget before I purchased this one. This book is recommended for grades K- 4<sup>th</sup> in any library.

Carol Tramp- Wynot Public Library, Wynot, NE

***You Can't Eat a Princess***

By Gillian Rogerson

It's princess Spaghetti's birthday, and does she love chocolate!!! Only one thing seems to be missing, her father, King Cupcake. When the princess receives a ransom note from aliens and the royal guards act like wienies, yes I said wienies! She decides that if she is going to have a birthday she will have to rescue him herself. An enjoyable story with pastel colored illustrations, this book is recommended for grades pre- 3<sup>rd</sup> in any library.

Carol Tramp- Wynot Public Library, Wynot, NE

**Runaway Mummy, a Petrifying Parody**

By Michael Rex

Imagine you are back in Egypt. Imagine that one night you see two mummies streaking across the desert, a larger one wearing a crown and a smaller one wearing a royal headdress. From there the story takes an unexpected turn with a lot of what ifs. The little mummy keeps questioning his mommy, what if I turned into a gargoye, etc.? Mommy mummy keeps responding with what she would do as they race across the book. Even though it is designed as a smaller children's book I think it would be better for older kids. You will have to read the book to find out what happens. This book is recommended for 2<sup>nd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> grades in any library.

Carol Tramp- Wynot Public Library, Wynot, NE

***Born Yesterday, the Diary of a Young Journalist***

By James Solheim

I was born on July 7; I will let you read my diary up until May 22<sup>nd</sup>. I have a sister, and a mother and a dad. They just don't realize how hard babies work and what their goals and ambitions really are. A really cute book about what a baby might be thinking about events and people in his life. This book gives a new perspective to babyhood. This book is recommended for pre- 3<sup>rd</sup> grades in any library.

Carol Tramp- Wynot Library, Wynot NE

***Pecan Pie Baby***

By Jacqueline Woodson

There's going to be a new baby in Gia's family. She's not sure how she feels about it. She is sure she doesn't want the new "ding- dang" baby to take any of Mama's time or the space that she has right next to mama. Mama reassures Gia, telling her that she needs to tell the new baby many things, including how much pecan pie they have eaten while mama was pregnant. This book is recommended for grades K- 2, in any library. This book was excellent; I like the gentle reassurance Gia's mom gave her.

Elaine Tobias

***Halo***

By Alexandra Adornetto

Three angels are sent down from heaven to live and become residents of a small rural town that is being threatened by dark forces. Their heavenly mission is to intervene with goodness. This book is recommended for grades 7- 12 and adults, in both libraries. It was written by an 18 year old girl and instead of vampires its angels. Excellent reading, keeps the reader involved in the story and the ending promises a sequel.

Kristy Wittler- Winside Public School Library

***Pajama Pirates***

By Andrew Kamen

Children have a bedtime adventure after they fall asleep. This book is recommended for ages 5- 7 years old, and is recommended for both school and public libraries. It is a fast read and the rhyming makes it very entertaining. This would be a fun book to read at bedtime to your children or grandchildren.

Kristy Wittler, Winside Public School Library

***The Magnificent 12: The Call***

By Michael Grant

A young boy who has a problem with bullies lives his school days switching to fantasy as a way to cope with the daily challenges. This book is recommended for grades 3- 6 in any library. It is a very easy read with no difficult vocabulary. This is the perfect book for readers who aren't into sports and physical activities and have a great imagination.

Shelia Cermak

***Nana Cracks the Case***

By Kathleen Lane

Two young children left in the care of an eccentric grandmother have a day full of adventure helping her solve a mystery. This book is recommended for 2<sup>nd</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> grade for any library. This book contains illustrations, maps and charts. This would be a great book for a reluctant reader and both boys and girls.

Shelia Cermak

***We Could Be Brothers***

By Derrick Barnes

Two very different boys from two very different walks of life become good friends after meeting each other in school detention. They both learn from each other's very different environment. This book is recommended for 5<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grade in any library. It contains black and white photos of the "brothers", this book would appeal to all types of kids, they can relate to so many of the author's that closely parallel real life in the city.

Shelia Cermak

***The Dear One***

By Jacqueline Woodson

A pregnant 15 year old goes to live with her mother's college friend while she awaits the birth of her baby. After many trials and tribulations the college friend's 12 year old daughter becomes friends with the pregnant teenager. Much is learned about life, family, and friendship during the visitation. This book is recommended for 7<sup>th</sup>- 11<sup>th</sup> grades in both school and public libraries. Most girls at this age level will find many things to relate to in this book. The characters in the story portray many anxious feelings.

Shelia Cermak

***The Smile***

By Donna Jo Napoli

In the mid 1400's in Florence, Italy, it was common practice for young girls in their early teens to be betrothed to be married at the discretion of their fathers. They looked for men who would provide a good life for their daughters. A man having a good job, money, prestige, and high ranking were very desirable. Monna Elisabetta hopes that she will have a say in her betrothal and marry for love, but she is quite aware that for most girls that does not happen. But then Leonardo da Vinci introduces her to Giuliano de' Medici, who nicknames her Mona Lisa. However, her life changes after her mother's death. Her father marries a young girl, not much older than herself, her sister-in-law dies in childbirth leaving a young son who Mona Lisa loves, she is not supposed to associate with her best friend who is a servant for their family, and Giuliano's brother is banished from Florence with Giuliano bound to follow him by honor and loyalty. What will happen to Mona Lisa and how does she become the model for one of the most famous portraits in history? This book is recommended for Upper Middle School readers or any library collection. When I realized this book was about Mona Lisa, I immediately thought I would not like it but I enjoyed it very much. The author mixed fact and fiction to tell the tale of Mona Lisa's teen years and how she came to be painted by Leonardo da Vinci. This is a love story and therefore many boys will probably not enjoy it but I think young girls will find it a fun read. Some readers may find it amazing how marriages were arranged for young women with usually no input from them. I would recommend this book.

Deb Daehnke

***Princesses Are Not Perfect***

By Kate Lum

Three princesses, each of whom has a particular talent, decide to switch jobs to help prepare for an upcoming party. They tackle their new jobs with enthusiasm because "princesses are good at everything". The job swap is a failure and each princess goes back to her old job having learned that princesses are best at doing what they love. Naturally the party is a success. This book is recommended for ages 4- 8 for both school and public libraries. This is a cute story little girls will love. It would be a good book to use to show that each person has unique talents.

Latricia Olson

**Half Brother**

By Kenneth Oppel

Thirteen-year-old Ben Tomlin is an only child living in Toronto Canada where his father teaches at the university. His father uproots their family and moves to Victoria, Canada, where he has received a grant for an experiment to determine if a chimpanzee can be taught to use American Sign Language. Ben is very unhappy about the move and even more unhappy when the eight-day-old chimp arrives. But they name him Zan and gradually Ben comes to think of him as more than just a chimp. The experiment goes well and Zan does learn to use American Sign Language. But a linguistic expert says Zan is not really signing, just imitating his teachers. When funding for the experiment dries up, what will happen to Ben's half brother? This book is recommended for middle school readers and any library collection. I enjoyed this book and thought it could be very thought provoking for young readers. While telling a fun story, the author raises some ethical questions worthy of consideration on how we treat animals in lab experiments. Should we take them away from their natural environment for our benefit? What do we do with them when an experiment is no longer relevant? Is it ok to subject them to physically painful tests or psychological pain to benefit humans? Ben matures and has to consider someone besides himself, Zan, and to seek a resolution for the troubled relationship he has with his father.

Deb Daehnke

***Bulldog's Big Day***

By Kate McMullan

A cookie baking bulldog decides he will get a job. He unsuccessfully tries to be a firefighter, a window washer, a sign painter and a bookseller. As he is asked to leave each job he gives each former boss a cookie. Returning home the bulldog is discouraged at his lack of success until his ex-bosses track him down looking for more cookies. Happily Bulldog opens his own cookie bakery. This adorable book is recommended for pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in any library. I believe children will delight in Bulldog's efforts to find a job. This would be a great book to use with a unit on career exploration. Besides who wouldn't want to make the featured cookies- a recipe for Bulldog's Oatmeal- carrot cookies is included in the book.

Latricia Olson



***Where's Walrus***

By Steven Savage

Walrus escapes from the zoo, and naturally the zookeeper tries to capture him. Walrus manages to evade the zookeeper by disguising himself as a fountain stature, window mannequin, firefighter, and various others about the city.

This wordless picture book is recommended for ages 3- 8 in both school and public libraries. Wordless picture books are a great way to improvise and custom tailor the story events to youngsters. The simple pictures are charming and preschoolers will love spotting the walrus.

Latricia Olson

***Chick- n- Pug***

By Jennifer Sattler

Chick reads The Adventure of Wonder Pug! ; and decides that his life as a chick is dull. He ventures off to find some excitement when he finds a sleepy, lazy pug he knows, this is Wonder Pug. The "adventures" with the pug help chick realize that Wonder Pug needs his assistance. This book is recommended for preschool- kindergarten in any library. This book has very large, colorful illustrations and very few words on each page. The young reader would find this story to be humorous, and teachers can use it to have some simple discussions about perception, and who the real hero is in the story.

Kathy Muller

***Fairy Bad Day***

By Amanda Ashby

Emma has come to Burtonwood Academy, a special school for kids who are sight- gifted; they can see some of the twelve elemental creatures. Emma's mother was also sight- gifted and was killed as she was slaying dragons. When Emma is assigned to hunt fairies instead of dragons she feels she isn't living up to her mother's legacy. Emma soon encounters Darkhel, a fierce elemental, which is seen by none of the other sight- gifted students. Will Emma be able to save the world from the Darkhel? This book is recommended for grades 4<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> in any library. This book was hard to put down, as the mystery of the Darkhel was introduced. The link to Emma's mother also comes in at the end. This book was an excellent mix of fantasy and mystery, with some teen insecurities and young love mixed in.

Kathy Muller

***The Line***

By Teri Hall

In *The Line*, Rachel and her mother live near the Line – an uncrossable border maintained by the National Border Defense System of the Unified States that separates the U.S. from Away, an area that has seen devastating bombings during a long ago war. Rachel has always been curious about the Line and Away, often sneaking time on the streamer to read government-controlled material about them and the mysterious Others that live in Away. Then when she finds a recorder with a call of help from someone in Away, she sees this as an opportunity to learn more. However, her actions lead her to discover some deep family secrets that may risk both her mother's and her own life. Will the U.S. Enforcement Officers arrest them both and send them to the Labor Pools or will Rachel have to make the ultimate sacrifice and cross the line? This book is reminiscent of the classics, *1984* or *Brave New World*, but on a much more accessible level. Two worlds exist in this story –one of a technologically advanced, but governmentally control society and one left completely behind by technology and society. The juxtaposition of the two worlds and the major themes within could spawn many conversations in the high school classroom. There is so much to consider and explore when reading this book. I couldn't put it down. I can't wait to see what happens to Rachel and her family in the next installment.

-Valerie Knight, WSC Library

***Furious George Goes Bananas***

By Michael Rex

In this book, which is a parody of "Curious George" books, an ape is captured in a jungle by a man in a funny hat. The man tries various ways to make money off of George, all of which make George furious. Finally George is able to parachute off of a rocket headed to space back to his jungle home. This book is recommended for ages 7- 10 in either type of library. Fans of Curious George may enjoy George's revenge as Furious George. Parents may enjoy it as much as their kids. Something will be lost to readers not familiar with Rey's Curious George Series.

Latricia Olson

**Away**

By Teri Hall

*Away* is the continuation of the story started in *The Line*. Rachel has found herself stranded on the other side of the Line— a supposedly uncrossable border maintained by the National Border Defense System of the Unified States that separates the U.S. from Away, an area that has seen devastating bombings during a long ago war. Rachel is staying with the Others, people that her own government has warned are dangerous. On top of that, Away is without any modern conveniences. There is no electricity, no running water, and no technology of any kind. Generations of people have grown up in Away trying to make a life after the bombs devastated the land. Rachel quickly learns that many of the Others have special gifts or powers that make them different from Regs, or Regular People. However, they are not as frightening as her government made them seem. Then she discovers that her father is alive in Away and captive by a group called the Roberts. She and her new friends attempt a rescue only to learn that the U.S. government has been involved in the kidnapping of several Others in Away. They need to travel deeper into Away to escape the meddling of the government. However, they first must cross the Line to rescue Rachel's mother. As intriguing as the first in the series, *Away* keeps you coming back for more. Teachers will find much content to use in this dystopian tale. High school students will pick it just for the complex and fast-paced excitement within. A great read. I'm sure a third in the series will be on its way to being well received as this second one.

-Valerie Knight, WSC Library